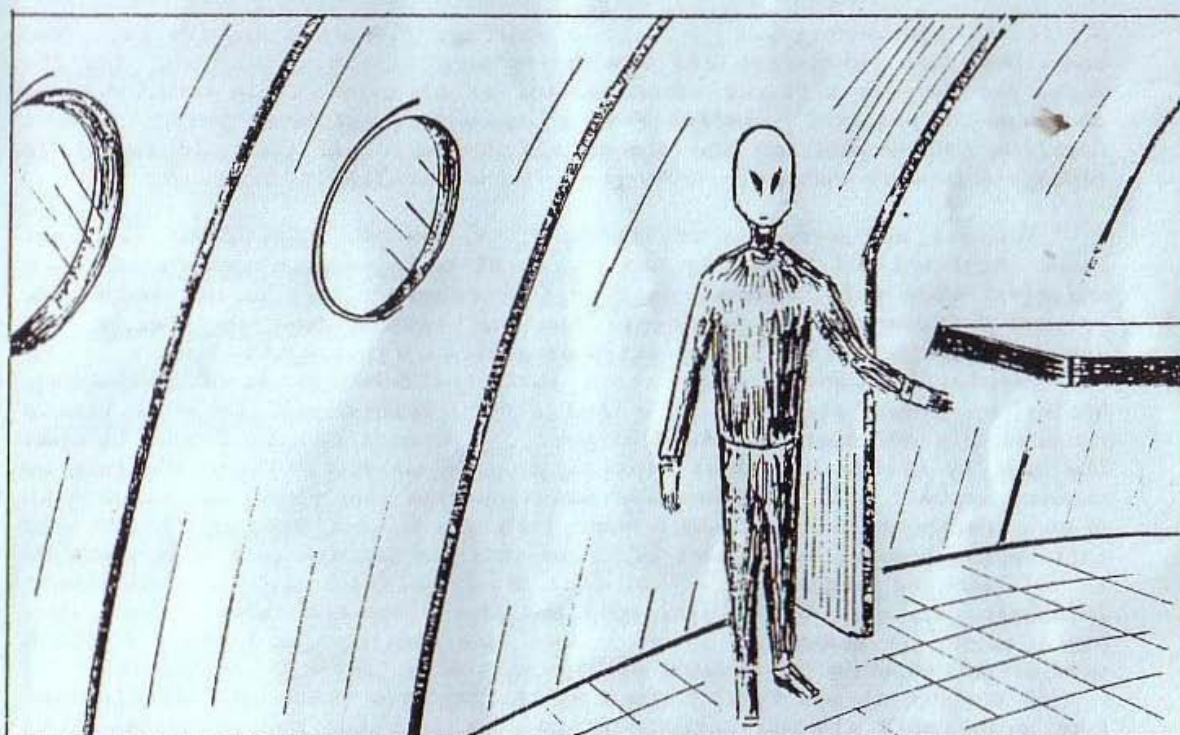


NORTHERN UFO NEWS

1 6 4

New Year 1994



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Once again profuse apologies about the delays bugging this magazine. Please rest assured that Northern UFO News is NOT about to fold - as some are fearing. It has plenty of life left in it yet and the months and years ahead look to be exciting ones. We celebrate our 20th anniversary in March (not many UFO magazines can ever claim that) and I intend to do so with a bumper issue to make up for the frustrations of these short-term problems. This issue (even if you are getting it in February!) is in fact the December one and the real February issue will come to you soon. There will be seven issues during 1994 to catch up. You will receive every one that you have paid for on subscription - I promise. So, please do continue to support us (see renewal details on page 3). We are keeping prices level for 1994 despite major postal and other production cost increases last autumn. Indeed - all being well - the next issue should launch a new look NUN. Stay tuned!

J. R. Comments . . . A year ago I wrote a lengthy editorial about American journalist Jim Schnabel's book 'Round in Circles' and its witty but largely critical assassination of the crop circle world. Well he has - as he promised - followed it up with a sequel, 'Dark White' (Hamish Hamilton £16.99), hitting the stores mid February. This time his target is UFOlogy - or, more correctly, UFOlogists. Can we survive the onslaught?

This is not a review of the book - that will follow in the next issue. As I write I have only had it for 24 hours and the impressions here are first ones only. However, as this book promises - or rather threatens, in most peoples eyes, to be one of the most talked about ventures of the year, it was appropriate to express some preliminary thoughts.

Firstly, it should be recalled that Jim Schnabel is a journalist. Whilst he could claim to have had direct involvement in crop circle research his association with UFOlogy is a lot more tenuous. Indeed he ends the book by citing John Keel (telling someone to quit UFOlogy and take up chasing women!) and expresses his own view that our field is filled with cranks, crackpots and deviants. A sure fire way of not winning friends and influencing people. To be part of it, he adds, is to risk your sanity and he is not sure he wants that - so ends his final sentence. He does, almost paradoxically, wish the subject well and leaves the door open a crack that there might be something in it - but his lasting conclusions - which will, of course, stick in readers minds, must rankle the UFO fraternity.

I suspect it was really aimed at the highbrow press who did his last book proud with glowing reviews in sources like the New Statesman, Times Literary Supplement and so forth. The upper crust media don't like UFO nuts - so, whilst Jim ran the risk of coming over as one of them his book would be predictably ignored. By ensuring that they hear that he shares their snobbish view and is instead one of the boys from Fleet Street then he stands a fair chance of reaping the rewards. They will hail this as a book which, so the blurb says, goes where no other UFO book has gone before, even though, to some extent (not entirely, I admit) it says little not already found in the voluminous literature of those deviant UFO nuts themselves.

I now rather see why the crop circle community hated him so much. They felt that he breezed in, hijacked their phenomenon, wrote it up in his own (quite entertaining) words and snatched credit - however indirectly and unintended - from the ones who had done the real work. To be fair he does offer credit and this new book (as with his last) names many names and features the results of a year long odyssey from UFOlogist to UFOlogist. But there is a vague feeling of one upmanship even if it was never intended.

'Dark White', an odd title omitting reference to aliens, which might have signalled to the media it was a book to be avoided, is not really about abductions. It appears to be but it is - overwhelmingly - a book about North American research into alien abductions, a very different thing. That is a fact that most reviewers, I predict, will forget - indeed, probably will not even realise, as it does not appear to have been unduly emphasised. As such they will consider it symptomatic of everywhere else and, utterly incorrectly, lump the UK, Europe, Australia, etc, in with what is indisputably a very vocal and influential body, but globally an unrepresentative approach.

This is not to say there is no mention of the differences. There is. A chapter is devoted to talks with myself, Hilary Evans and Paul Devereux (from the UK) - but that is swamped by 90% of the book which is about Budd Hopkins, Whitley Strieber, David Jacobs, John Mack and so forth. So far as I can see - nobody elsewhere even gets a look in - eg Keith Basterfield in Australia (one critical omission) or, for that matter, the rather sophisticated approach to the subject in countries such as France.

I say, as far as I can see, as - like his previous book - Dark White has no index. That was a failing of Round in Circles - it is utterly inexcusable in this book, which ranges over many complex theories and stories and has several blank white pages at the back just crying out to be filled with a meaningful index. How a responsible publisher of a book that will get glowing reviews at least partly because of its highbrow origin can justify this is hard to fathom. It needs rectifying immediately for any paperback edition as it makes this large book full of serious ideas very tough to negotiate and near useless for research purposes. A very great pity.

This minimal interest apparently shown in any non-American UFOlogy will not sit easily outside the USA. And inside the USA his largely negative assessment of what his subtitle calls an 'obsession' will probably infuriate all bar Philip Klass - whose work seems well thought of.

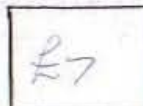
Nor will many abductees be enthralled by the author's theory, offered towards the rear of the book, where he likens them to the witch trials and demonic possessions of the middle ages (indeed he cites 17th century texts about as much as he cites non American UFOlogy which is a bit worrying). He appears to be heading towards a concept where abductions are a form of MPD (multiple personality disorder). But I'll say more on that when I've read the book thoroughly, as it is an interesting theory deserving attention.

I should make clear this is far from being a bad book. This is, in fact, a very illuminating ramble through the weed infested jungles of American abduction research by an outsider with an undeniable penchant for skilful writing. I have noticed (as have others) the author's tendency to descriptive prose, which implies he could write excellent fiction. In the pages about me, for instance, what he says is mostly fair inference, but some details owe a bit to what I'd call artistic interpretation of the events.

He has chapters headed 'Budd', 'Whitley', 'Klass' and 'John and Ken' (evidently John Mack and Ken Ring). But the one that opens with a discussion about my ideas is titled 'Old Hag'. My lawyers are preparing the writs as I speak and will reject all claims that the old hag is a psychological phenomenon discussed later in the chapter...! More next time.

1 9 9 4 RENEWALS!

The box opposite shows any sum due now to cover all six of the 1994 issues of Northern UFO News. Rates are unchanged. Those who renew by 11 March can deduct £1 from the quoted sum in thanks. Pay to 'NUFON'



MUFORA TAKE THE NARO VIEW

MUFORA, the oldest surviving affiliate group and one of the original founders of the NUFON network in 1974 has relaunched itself. After 31 years as a small, selective UFO group based in Manchester the team have decided to expand into other aspects of the paranormal and design a new self image.

NARO stands for Northern Anomalies Research Organisation. The group will continue to investigate UFO reports and participate in the NUFON alliance but they will also research other paranormal phenomena, much in the vein of SPI in Scotland. They have officially affiliated with ASSAP (the association for the scientific study of anomalous phenomena).

Although for the time being at least meetings will still alternate between Manchester and Stockport the group has decided to broaden its base. Members are already drawn from a wide area covering Merseyside to north Staffordshire and east Lancashire and an experimental one day meet was held in Warrington in November and may presage further regional events.

The irony of the 'NARO' acronym in conjunction with a decision to broaden the outlook of the group is quite intentional. The group intend to design T-shirts with logos suggesting that people broaden their mind by taking a NARO view on the supernatural!

Those wishing to contact the group can still do so via Peter Hough: -
6 Silsden Ave Lowton Warrington WA3 1EN Tel: - 0942-604265

As we go to press the BUFORA Irish branch have announced similar plans to launch as an independent group with a wider purview than just UFOs; but still actively pursuing UFO cases as before. More on that news next time.

NEWS ROUND UP

:: Thanks to George Hunt from Skipton for bringing to my attention a fascinating piece in 'The Times' (19 Jan 1994) which reported on declassified evidence from US military satellites in earth orbit. It seems that they have been recording massive explosions in the upper atmosphere - at least 3 of the 136 detected since 1975 being above Britain. They yield more than 1000 tonnes of TNT and are considered a form of unknown natural event. The reason they have been kept secret is the fear that they might be mistaken for a nuclear attack and trigger a response from volatile nations. There is speculation that one of these impacts might have caused the famous Tunguska explosion in June 1908 and, according to British astronomer John Mason, that they might trigger UFO reports. They are thought to be visible from the ground as huge bursts of light and that when reported these are usually in the context of 'flying saucers'. However, much of the released energy from these baffling explosions occurs in the infra-red spectrum.

:: Nick Pope at the MoD has recently supplied information on 1993 UFO reports submitted, including a hand drawn map of the locations of these. There were 255 during the year (fairly average) and some patterns could be traced. These include the Bristol wave in June/July (see NUN 162) and the late March 'satellite reentry' (see NUN 161), plus assorted flaps brought about by airship activity and a bright fireball meteor event. This is the first time the MoD have supplied such data and its a most welcome initiative.

:: Nick Pope further advises that at the turn of the year two new batches of UFO data were released under the 30 year rule and are available from the Public Records office in London. Visitors who wish to access them should cite file references AIR 2/16918 and AIR 2/17318. Let us know what you find in there if you do visit the PRO.

:: Fortean Times plan to stage an 'Unconvention' in the summer with the preliminary plans being to stage this over two days (18/19 June) at the University College in London. Two themes - at this stage planned to be spontaneous human combustion and alien abductions - will dominate the proceedings, with invited speakers and a floor debate, but there will be other mini presentations too throughout the weekend. We'll keep you posted when plans are firmer.

:: Fancy earning \$1000 ? If you are interested in crop circles then you could. Dr Alexander Imich is running a prize essay competition sponsored by the Center for Frontier Sciences at Temple University, USA. All you have to do is submit an original (unpublished) paper on the theme - 'Are all crop circles merely hoaxes?' The winner will be published by the center but all copyright will be retained by the author. Submissions must be made by 30 June 1994 on one side of A4 paper with at least 1 inch margins on each side and using double sided type. Three copies of each entry must go to:-
W.P. La Parl contest coordinator 10 Wood St Hopkinton MA 01748-1132 USA

NEW GROUP FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

Doug Pickford, who works for the local paper in Macclesfield, has decided to create a new group to research UFOs and the paranormal in the north midlands. This is a very active area which has had little coverage since the demise of the BUFORA Staffordshire branch in the late 1970's after a period of great heritage with the fine work of Roger Stanway and Tony Pace, focusing on the still standing and self financed Newchapel astronomical observatory on a hill in the north Potteries.

The new group tested the water recently with a lecture by Doug himself on myths and legends and over 200 eagerly attended that event! It will have a proper launch on Wednesday 9 March 1994 (start 7.30 pm) when they have been kind enough to invite me to talk about UFOs, including a look at some of the strange activity in Staffordshire over the years.

The lecture/new group meeting will take place at the Swan Hotel in Leek, Staffordshire - just off the A 523 opposite St Edwards church.

We wish the new group every success, welcome them to the scene, and they are, of course, a further example of an organisation choosing to go for a broader based approach towards investigation and research.

Looking further ahead LAPIS, on the Fylde coast, also are aiming to stage a more widely based conference in Blackpool, Lancashire on Saturday 28 May 1994 - under the auspices of ASSAP. It will feature several lectures on a wider range of topics than just UFOs (although these will be included). More on that in the next issue when more details are to hand.

Addresses:- Doug Pickford 24 Nab Hill Ave Leek Staffs ST13 8EE
LAPIS June Cameron 58 Torsway Ave Blackpool Lancs FY3 8JZ

BONNYBRIDGE BITES BACK!

Issue 162 and 163 have both featured pieces with very different views on the wave of sightings in Bonnybridge, Scotland, which attracted media attention in late 1992 and early 1993 - including US and Japanese TV and our own Sky TV with documentaries. In a recent interview with 'The Scotsman' newspaper this was the one topic they kept raising for me to give my opinions. I should make clear that I have no fixed stance. I have not personally investigated any of the cases but appreciate two things. Real UFO waves can occur and there are genuine window areas. Equally, I know that when events get publicised it is almost inevitable that media publicity feeds upon itself to create a hype. What really occurs is that witnesses who previously are too shy to come forward (because of the 'fear of ridicule' factor) get encouragement from others and so do start talking. All opinion poll surveys suggest that we discover only 1 in 10 UFO sightings - the rest being kept to the witness and their immediate family - so it is easy to see how 'pseudo waves' can come about, implying that an area is a window when it is really only reflecting a hidden and yet the more true level of UFO activity if social barriers were not in force. The Bonnybridge debate raises interesting issues about such things and the arguments rage on...

Malcolm Robinson sent me a copy of a letter he sent to Ron Halliday on 30 December 1993, to which this following piece appears to be at least a partial response. I will quote a few paragraphs from it to give you the essence of Malcolm's arguments, so as to try to be even-handed. He feels the crux is that Ron is making public comments without seeing the evidence. 'By all means (do so)...if you had talked to the witnesses... (but) would it not have been wiser to see our data before commenting?' Malcolm offers a 'date early in 1994' for Scottish UFOlogists like Ron to see the data and it will then be made openly available to all... 'please reserve judgement till then.'

In reply is an article by Ron Halliday - 'Looking into Bonnybridge'.

The events in this town have generated more controversy amongst Scottish UFOlogists than any previous sightings in the country. Malcolm Robinson explained that SPI members had been amazed that he was letting me and Ken Higgins get away with telling people that Bonnybridge was a publicity stunt and that councillor Billy Buchanan was deeply upset by such cutting comments. He added they were made without looking at the evidence.

Reality of the events apart, it seems that a myth is being created of (we) jealous UFOlogists trying to downgrade one another's efforts. But a look at how the events developed will, I hope, show that there is a basis for concern over establishing what has gone on in Bonnybridge.

In the first place, the initial reported sightings occurred against an upsurge of interest in the subject. Jenny Randles book 'UFOs and how to see them' was widely reported by the media including TV coverage noting that Scotland was a focal point of UFO activity. The Scottish UFO hot line had been set up (with more major publicity). Indeed both my group (Scottish Earth Mysteries Research) and Ken Higgins Scottish UFO research organisation were contacted via the hot line by Bonnybridge area witnesses.

As we struggled to cope with over 100 cases Councillor Buchanan was featured in the media about the sightings and it was announced that Malcolm Robinson was investigating them. I did not regard our group in competition with SPI. I was relieved Malcolm was doing this as we were so busy.

Indeed we have an unofficial arrangement between Scottish groups not to investigate a case if another group already is doing so. Malcolm tells me that his first question to the media was to ask if any other group was investigating the cases in Bonnybridge. I agreed to pass on any local cases from that area as might come in to us in future via the hotline.

In my view a 'Sunday Post' article of 31 January 1993 badly compromised investigation work in the town. The story saw the councillor holding a poster about a UFO lecture in Bonnybridge that night. It added that over 400 calls had come into the councillor and 'experts' were concerned.

In the story Malcolm Robinson was cited saying that many cases could be explained, 'but there are still some which are totally inexplicable.' The paper further added that some witnesses would be hypnotised to seek 'subconscious memories of being taken on board alien spacecraft.' This did not happen in the end, but 300 arrived to hear Malcolm lecture in town.

I feel that these events publicised by Scotland's most popular Sunday newspaper were like throwing petrol on a bonfire. In place of appraising the situation investigators must have become more like bellows used by the media to help puff the matter up.

Had the media not got in touch I would have remained silent, despite my misgivings. But BBC Radio Scotland asked me to take part in programme about Bonnybridge. I stated that all reports should be taken seriously but urged caution on the Bonnybridge events until thorough investigation. I did express concern about the hype that was obscuring the reality in process.

Then, on 25 May 1993, the Stirling Observer, my local paper, effected my view of the matter. Malcolm Robinson was reported to be persuaded that Bonnybridge was 'one of the world's few windows to another dimension.' But what really shook me was the councillor's reported comments that intimated how the Japanese film crew then in town might have 'an uncle called Mitzubishi who might want to build a factory in Bonnybridge.' He had even produced for the tourists a 'massive cake shaped like a flying saucer.'

The Scotsman called me afterwards and in the context of the above I said things that have apparently upset the councillor. My remarks were not directed against the validity of witness testimony, but the way the investigation was being reported by the media. They paraphrased this into me saying it was all 'a bit of a circus'. Then, the Falkirk Herald, which circulates in Bonnybridge, picked my comments up and headed their story on 11 June 1993 'Billy's Unidentified Flying Circus'. This headline did not come from me but I had indicated my concern over how the matter had been handled but clearly stated that the incidents required serious investigation; although that was difficult given the excitement whipped up.

I should add that journalists who spoke to me were finding the saga highly entertaining and I was actually trying to convince them that the sightings were worth investigating. Our group has never suggested that the Bonnybridge incidents were 'got up' for purely publicity reasons. I firmly believe that all witness testimony should be taken seriously and handled with suitable discretion. The point is that in Bonnybridge, because of how the story was allowed to run, we may be in danger of doing these witnesses and Scottish UFOlogy a disservice.

Editor:- Ron Halliday has proposed a 'review commission' with representatives from all Scottish groups (plus BUFORA) to assess the evidence and 'help clear the air'. In fairness I will carry any important new comments on this story sent by any party (including Bonnybridge council, who may want a say), but otherwise will now call this debate closed.

MENWITH HILL - TRACKING UFOs?

Welcome back Yorkshire's Nigel Mortimer after a long absence. He tells me he has a book coming soon, but in the meantime has a cause for concern.

In late 1993 the Channel 4 current affairs programme 'Dispatches' featured the Otley Peace Womens Group (OPWG) relating how they had several times breached the high security at the USAF/NSA (National Security Agency) top secret base at Menwith Hill north of their town in the Yorkshire dales. They took sensitive documents from a number of office buildings.

These files confirmed suspicions that the base was being used for global spying at several levels with sophisticated electronic and satellite surveillance equipment. Locals were led to believe that after the cold war had ended Menwith Hill activity would be cut back, but in fact these documents prove that the opposite is true. It is to be greatly expanded.

One expansion programme (code name Steeple-Bush 2) has been set up with golf balls hiding satellite dishes set on one area of sky. It should be completed by 15 May 1994. In late 1993 there were already 21 such so-called 'Radomes' in operation at the base, but future builds will be done in such a way as to prevent outsiders seeing the orientation of the satellite dish before the protective housings are constructed.

The OPWG confirmed through their missions that spying is not limited to air defence, but includes extensive phone tapping of businesses and individuals from Menwith Hill, with computers set to pick up key words in any conversation. But I feel that greater secrets will be held in more secure positions within Menwith than those the women so easily infiltrated. The NSA even seemed strangely carefree about their invasions.

The obvious UFO connection with Menwith Hill encourages many still unanswered questions. (The NSA - of whom this is one of their most important global sites - were the subject of the most intense freedom of information fight for UFO documents some years ago - resulting in the infamous '21 page affidavit' which only a security cleared judge could see - he not even being cleared to see the hundreds of UFO files themselves! UFOs have been seen in the moorland around the base ever since it was constructed - indeed the proximity of the case on page 104 of 'Abduction' was almost certainly the reason why the MoD took such a big interest in these witnesses - JR).

Cases I have investigated include one in 1981 where a large light in the sky emitted a staggered beam (like a laser) onto one of the golfballs. In another a couple driving by the perimeter fence saw a being like a small child trying to get over the fence. This was late at night in remote moorland, bear in mind!

The base, however, tell me that nobody ever sees anything or reports it to them. Yet, as 'Dispatches' revealed, a prime target for reconnaissance was Lockheed who manufacture top secret aircraft like the Stealth F-17 jet.

It is odd that these women got in so easily and were allowed to walk away without being searched. Once I was confronted by a jeep full of soldiers just for looking over the fence! However, all is not as it seems. Someone who worked there during construction in the sixties told me there was much more to the site than visible above ground. 20 square miles worth of sound proofing and pipe lagging material was taken in for a surface area just one quarter of this. If so then Menwith Hill itself may be the biggest secret of the 30 mystery 'black projects' referred to by the documents brought out by the OPWG. I am now in touch with this group and will report on anything they or I find which reflects on the UFO link with the Hill.

FOR YOUR PERUSAL

Major articles elsewhere



Awareness 1993/94 (Price??? for 4, A5, 28pp: 11 Ouseley Close Oxford OX3 0JS)
Reports the 31 March 1993 sightings, insists they were 'fobbed off' as a satellite reentry but has evidence that they were definitely UFOs. Also an extended look at 30 of the complex circle formations that formed in 1993.

IUR Nov (\$30 for 6: CUFOS 2457 W Peterson Ave Chicago IL 60659 USA)
A report on renewed searches for the missing archaeologist in the Roswell crash. 40 years of UFO opinion poll surveys. Irwin Wider's brilliant demolition of the classic Willamette Pass photo as a road sign! Plus yours truly on the influx of camcorder UFO images in Britain during 1993.

MUFON Journal; (\$30 for 12: 103 Oldtowne Rd Seguin TX 78155-4099 USA)
Nov: Abductions, mind control and experimental drugs are linked.
Dec: Bruce Maccabee analyses a 1993 camcorder image and Budd Hopkins tells you all how to 'write right' in your UFO case reports.

BAE Dec (\$25 CAN mon order: 2 St Clair Av West Ste 607, Toronto, ONT M4V 1L5)
This just gets better and better. It is packed with digests from psychology and psychiatric journals, plus Persinger's latest brain physiology work in his unceasing publication blitz. Anything relevant to CE4s from sources you otherwise wouldn't see is here and debated. This is one journal that's a MUST

GEM 17 (£5.75 fpor 3: GEM PO Box 258 Cheltenham Glos GL53 0HR)
One magazine that really lives up to its acronym. It's a real gem. Hugely improved in content and visual quality don't be put off by its earth mystery tag. There is usually good stuff in here about UFOs and crop circles too and very attractively designed. I can heartily recommend this to anyone.

Anomaly 13 (£2 each, free to ASSAP members: ASSAP 20 Paul St Frome BA11 1DX)
Account of how to initiate lucid dream and related altered states of mind.

F. Times 72 (£12 for 6: John Brown Pubshng: Freepost SW6096 Frome BA11 1YA)
Reviews the Sheffield conference (see p. 10 following). Plus sleep anomalies.

Fate Jan (\$37.95 US for 12: FATE PO Box 1940, 170 Future Way, Marion OH 43305)
Enters year 47 with issue 526 of its monthly offerings - a paranormal record by a long way. Antonio Huneus reviews latest UFO news (eg updating the Walton case, the face on mars saga etc). Plus John Keel in each issue now

Strange 12 (£13.50 for 4: Mark Chorvinsky Box 2246 Rockville MD 20847 USA)
The US equivalent of FT on smashing new thin glossy paper. Nigel Watson starts a series on airship reports from Britain in the early 20th century.

Folklore Frontiers (£5 for 4: P Screeton 5 Egton Dr Seaton Carew TS25 2AT)
Lots of snippets on the bizarre and the unusual - often sexist though!

J. Meteorology (£26 for 10: 54 Frome Rd Bradford on Avon Wilts BA15 1LD)
If you are missing Terence Meaden's views on crop circles J. Met (which he edits) brings you other anomalies in his purview, notably ball lightning - which gets frequent coverage in recent issues, including new cases.

THE SHEFFIELD CON AND FORTEAN TIME: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

In Fortean Times 72, Peter Brookesmith (ex editor of 'The Unexplained') reports on the August 1993 Sheffield conference. In his comments on my lecture about 'Wonderland' - the Preston Brook/Daresbury window area near Runcorn, he makes two odd negative charges.

He says that I have 'taken at face value the idea that some UFOs can't land in the wet' - a ludicrous point. In fact I clearly stated that this was testimony from an abduction witness in this area who was told this during his experience. Naturally, I would take that claim no more literally than I have ever taken words reported by 'aliens' during abduction experiences!

More importantly, Brookesmith claims that I was finding what I was looking for in discovering this window 'right on my doorstep' and that ANY area would have had a few strange cases. Indeed, the Fortean Times editors choose this piece to extract from their article as a very visible shout line and compound the mistake by misquoting their own text! They say I live on the Mersey estuary, when Stockport is around 30 miles from there - in fact the river's source. So this window is hardly on my doorstep anyhow.

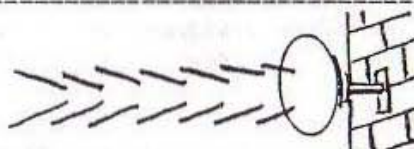
In any case, whilst a local researcher can act as a magnet to cases and thus create an illusion of a window that surrounds them, this doesn't work with me. I am not in the catchment area of the local media and - having had my address in 25 books now - get many cases every week from witnesses all over the world, destroying any real selectivity in the incoming data.

Moreover, as readers of the section about this region in 'Mysteries of the Mersey Valley' (Sigma Press, 1993) will realise, this is no mere random effect. I defy Peter Brookesmith to find any other area in Britain (bar Warminster, perhaps, or Todmorden/Bacup - maybe - which I expect he would rule out on the grounds that I was unfortunately born and raised there!) which has the same long term pattern as Preston Brook and Daresbury. We are talking about a rural location of only about 25 square miles in which so many vehicle interference, CE 4 and other altered states of consciousness experiences have occurred that chance seems very unlikely to apply.

I am willing to be proven wrong in this assessment, but you only have to see the wealth of data to suspect otherwise. It was this that forced me to accept the idea. I certainly never went looking out for a window; although I do suspect that Brookesmith is partly right and plenty of others will exist if sought (eg - maybe - we will learn from retrospective analysis that Bonnybridge was/is one). I think they depend upon Persinger's energy transients, Devereux's geophysical or Meaden's atmospheric focal points (or indeed all three). Sadly, Brookesmith appears to have rejected the idea of windows virtually out of hand without looking at the extent of the data. He admits that this was the first UFO conference he has attended since 1982 and UFOlogy hasn't changed. But it has - we are much further forward. Pity he missed the revolution, because the Sheffield conference was a spearhead.

MEDIA MATTERS

A look at UFOs in the public eye



In the wake of the 'Strange but True?' ITV network showing of the film about the Todmorden/Bacup window last autumn there have been some interesting local media follow ups - including one witness in Barkisland who told the Halifax Courier he had seen a little green man!

Odder still, was the Accrington Observer (15 Oct) which reported how a local Hyndburn councillor informed a development committee how Rossendale might be a magnet for UFOs because of the Coal Clough wind farm featured on the programme. Sadly, I can disillusion the council because I spent a wet and windy day driving up and down moors as the LWT crew searched for a spot to film and spent an hour by those sodden windmills doing take after retake of my 15 second epic. The location was more fluke than design and had much to do with the need for an unusual visual backdrop to another 'talking head' on the show, rather than any hypothetical aliens homing in on the area because of this newly built view from above.

But the real story of the moment is the EEC plan to turn the old GEPAN in Toulouse (or SEPRA as now) into a Euro funded UFO investigation unit.

The media loved it. There were sensible pieces (eg in The Guardian - 2 Dec) although even they added how Europe 'is more often associated with building white elephants than seeing pink ones'. The news (reported in NUN a year ago) is that Tullio Regge, an Italian EEC MP and physicist, has got the energy commission to accept his year old plan and put it to the full parliament. However, much of the publicity was predictably silly.

The Times (20 Dec) suggested that the EEC report (which focused on the Belgian wave) was the final refutation of the case for the UFO, as any aliens having traversed the galaxy would go anywhere but Belgium. The Daily Mail had a picture of Jacques Delors next to ET likening him to the alien. Charmant! They also led the campaign against such a frivolous waste and soon Euro MPs of all UK complexions were fighting the 'nonsense'.

I did appear on BBC-1 with Anne Diamond and Nick Owen and gave an interview to The Scotsman, stressing to both that the point was not about wasting money on searching for ET but instead reminded that it was the ENERGY commission that were backing the proposal. If the Japanese were spending sums on seeking new energy sources from researching UAP style UFOs (eg those that might be natural plasmas, etc) then we had an obligation not to slip behind. But I suspect I was offering up a pretty forlorn argument.

Perry Petrakis in France tells me as we go to press that the mass outcry by the UK media (the only country to react so) caused the EEC to postpone a decision. In any case French UFOlogists have their own reasons not to want SEPRA to take on all Euro cases (they view them as strictly a one way street - information goes in, none comes out). And I guess it could give the MoD an excuse to shut down Air Staff 2A's UFO interest for good.

The Financial Times (2 Dec) even pointed out that the plan might make bringing new countries into the EEC a problem of intergalactic proportions if aliens now had to be considered as well as all the ex Communist states. They added, with delicious irony (almost certainly never intended!) that the 12 member states 'are already chary about taking into the Union four new Nordic (applicants)'... The Greys have yet to apply to Brussels, I gather.

BOOK UPDATE

Readers asked for an update on coming UK books. John Spencer's new abduction book is due soon but Albert Budden's UFO work (with Blandford) has been put back to Spring 1995. My latest, 'The Unexplained' (a visual look at the paranormal 20 th century) is released in February in softback from Anaya. In June Peter Hough and I release a series of detailed essays in 'The Encyclopedia of the Unexplained' (Michael O'Mara). In July Blandford publish my book 'Time Travel' (which assess the evidence for this) and in August Peter and I publish a very visual and detailed history of UFOs via Piatkus.

BOOKS OF THE MOMENT



Ghosts, traditions and legends of old Lancashire Ken Howarth Sigma £7.95

A 172 page softback with dozens of little stories, often only a paragraph or two in length. These cover the folklore and mythology of Lancashire with quite a few ghostly experiences thrown in. This is not, of course, a UFO book. Nor is it really a book of paranormal investigations, but it is a lively read and there is plenty of background material on topics such as Pendle Hill. It could be useful if researching the anecdotal history of a suspected north-west window area, for example.

UFO: The planets most complete guide to close encounters PC Disk or CD-ROM

And now for something completely different. We have reviewed cassette tapes and UFO related music before. In 1991 Australian UFOlogists brought out a UFO book on floppy disk - but it had few real advantages over a real book. Now comes the first in what is sure to be an industry of interactive computer programs that are commercially available. So is this product a breakthrough in UFOlogy, and, perhaps more importantly, is it actually useful?

There is good news and bad news on both counts. You need a PC to run the program. Those still clinging to their ancient Amstrad PCWs have no chance as the concept is simply too big and sophisticated. Ideally you need a 486 PC with a good graphics card too; although check first if you have an older or smaller model. It may well still work. With this you can then run the cut down version (that has a data base of 500 cases plus photos). But to use the program in full glory you need a CD-ROM drive. Most PCs can fit one for under £200 now and its well worth future proofing your system this way. Wanting 'UFO' on CD-ROM might give you the excuse to do just that.

With the CD-ROM version of 'UFO' much more data is stored, more than doubling the number of available cases on tap and allowing access to stored video from 22 cases (these aren't on disk). They run - more, or less, jerkily according to the quality and speed of your CD-ROM - (get at least a double-speed if you can). Quality of reproduction seems sensitive to the hardware.

With either disk or CD-ROM version you have a data base of cases to play around with. These include text (poorly incorporated) and still photos (rather better handled). With a good sound card you also get witness commentary, newsreel dubbing and even alleged UFO noises! The fine interface allows you to use windows very effectively to select out categories such as 'abduction', 'cattle mutilations', etc. There are several sub menus and a world map that lets you click on locations to trace cases.

The programme is a lot of fun to play with - rather more, sadly, than is its actual content when you retrieve it. The concept is very cleverly implemented. Its just a shame the same flexibility did not go into providing the UFO cases that were fed into this quite excellent software design.

The UFO data is put together by Wendelle Stevens and is, not surprisingly, predominantly American. There is not a single British abduction (indeed - incredibly - hardly any abductions are mentioned at all). The 22 video sequences contain classics like Kaikoura (with musical sound effects), Tremonton, Catalina Island, etc (but again nothing from Europe) and the 200 still photographs also omit any British cases - except a stream of recent crop circle photos (or, to be more accurate, Doug and Dave hoaxes).

The text accompanying all circle pictures is the same - and explains that, whilst some people tried to dismiss them as hoaxes and weather effects, the brilliant work of Dr Colin Andrew (sic) showed them to be some kind of alien communication. I'm afraid that's not untypical.

As for the non photographic cases, there are serious omissions. No Bentwaters, Belgian wave, etc, etc. The tiny few UK cases are mostly very old and wouldn't make most people's list of top (or even strong) evidence.

There is no doubt that some UFOlogist will one day work with a software company to design a better database with a truly representative sample of cases. This is over reliant on sometimes dubious photos to the detriment of solid cases and often lacks objective text, beyond saying very much more than, in effect, 'an anonymous source filmed this'.

That said, this is the cutting edge of technology and UFOlogy is in at the deep end. In years to come this - being the original attempt - will likely become a sought after collectors item. Whilst it would be dishonest to pretend this venture will set your work alight, it is great fun and easy to use, providing an instant data base and, if operated with the caveat not to be taken at face value, could help serious researchers. Better than this will come in future - but it isn't here yet, so enjoy tomorrows world today.

PC disk £34.95 / CD-ROM £44.95 (both post inc) Don't buy from a computer store (its dearer there) - go to Guildsoft Ltd The Computer Complex City Business Park Stoke Plymouth PL3 4BB T: 0752-606200 Fax: 0752-606174

BRIEF CASES

Some current investigations



On the night of the 31st...

Readers will know about the events of around 1.10 am on 31 March 1993 when two bright lights crossed Ireland, South Wales and South West England. A number of reports were made from France and Portugal too. The official explanation is that a Soviet satellite reentered that night and burnt up as it did so. Some UFO groups believe there may be another stranger solution and other events may have been trawled in alongside the satellite reentry.

This case is the furthest north for a possible Cosmos witness; although from his account there may be more to it. The sighting comes from Mr R from Brownhills, West Midlands (same witness as in case 8761 - see NUN 162). Mr R was unable to sleep that morning and saw a bright light approach from the NW. This was followed by another too far behind to be on an aircraft. They both passed the moon at great speed and silently. Then, here is the odd bit, 'they just rotated like a Catherine Wheel - the vehicle that was at the front ended up at the back. Then, instead of going forward in single file as before, they just spaced out and carried on moving in parallel. It was just like they were playing games... I went outside and could see a small amount of smoke, as if they had slowed down after that manoeuvre.

The next night Mr R walked into fields at 20.30 to survey the area where the lights had disappeared. He saw what he took to be floodlights lighting up some bushes through mist ('spreading the beam on top'). After a few moments they just went out. Next day he returned to the site and saw that there was nothing to account for the lights, only farmland. Indeed the 'bushes' were tall trees and the lights must have been well above ground.

Animal disturbance in rural Wales

Case 9231 13 November 1992 Rhayader, Wales

Thanks to Janet Bord

At 18.00 Ms H, a student at a mid Wales university, was returning with a friend from Aberystwyth to England on the A44. The sky was clear as they drove through a remote hilly area. A white light appeared on their right and they slowed to watch it move erratically to the north. It was low, moving slowly and not blinking in any way like a normal aircraft tends to do.

The two drove on, keeping their eyes on the light, then rounded a bend in the quiet, pretty isolated mountainous country and were confronted by an amazing sight. 'It was fairly low and stationary. It had a more complex lighting system than the first light.' In effect this was a sequence of red, green and white lights which flashed on and off in a circular band. 'This gave the impression of a flattened circular vessel.' There was no sound at all, despite the still surroundings. They estimate it was about 1 mile from the road below the silhouetted summit of a hill.

Cattle in a field between the object and the road were seemingly milling about making a commotion as if effected. The two had stopped the car and watched for about 3 minutes before the object began to glide away silently to the north west. The first light, still visible further away, moved with this one and both passed out of sight over the distant hills.

The two students drove on and a few minutes later met a third light that passed directly overhead. This had four erratically flickering lights underneath. They stopped again and two others followed the same route over their heads. They seemed to be travelling in pairs.

The students have not responded to pleas for further information, but another attempt is being made. I suspect military exercises are a real possibility in this area, but the silence of the craft seems to negate this idea. They say that the objects were 'not of our planet or our technology.'

Case 9312 18 October 1993 Simmondley, Glossop, Derbyshire Roy Sandbach

Mrs H and her son live in a very elevated house south of Glossop amidst this earthlight rich location. The boy, aged 7, watches the aircraft inbound to Manchester and Mrs H is equally familiar. At 19.15 this night he called his mother out to see something they both knew was no aircraft. Instead three bright red lights - spread in a long straight line - were seen passing overhead (from the north west) and heading towards the east south east over open moorland. There was no sound and the speed was very slow (they were visible upwards of 2 minutes).

Although this is definite UAP country these lights appear to have been too high and long lived for typical earthlights. Manchester Airport were very helpful. Their radar log clearly indicated no air traffic in the area at the time and they tended to support Roy's assessment of some unknown form of atmospheric phenomenon.

Case 9401 16 January 1994 Littleton, Chester, Cheshire Roy Sandbach

Mr B was driving near the Sainsbury store at 21.30 when he spotted a large light surrounded by multi-coloured bars of light moving up and down in a vertical direction. He watched for about 10 minutes as it remained static, then drove home to bring back a friend. Minutes later when they reached the spot it had gone. He called police who contacted the MoD at West Drayton immediately. They confirmed no objects were known to be in the air.

During the next 24 hours several other witnesses came forward from Upton and Plas Newton, describing similar objects at about the same time - eg 'a strange shaped object with lights down the side' and 'a massive light with two smaller lights at the side'. All accounts say the object was silent. These sightings are north west of Chester and only 5 miles from the (non existent) window around Helsby - see earlier in this issue.

CASE HISTORY

The lights of Louth Pt 1 Peter Gregory, Mike Morley, Mike Beadle, Rosie Oakes

Long term NUN readers may recall the UFO wave of 1984. One of the big cases was the sighting at Saltfleet, Lincolnshire, on 22 April (see NUN Case history in issue 113). There was always a faint whiff of military activity about this case for me - indeed most of the cases in the wave were in some way associated directly with the military. Sadly, WYUFORG never completed a full report. Also I did not know at the time how close Saltfleet was (just 2 miles south in fact) from RAF Donna Nook - a practice air bombing range.

However, a new case has now erupted which involves Donna Nook; although this time we can be absolutely certain that they were not the culprits. As they may, of course, have also been back in 1984 this time they were very definitely the victims. Indeed, this was no minor incident. It was a new wave.

I first heard of the events a week before Christmas via a phone call from a journalist in Louth, a small town in rural north Lincolnshire. Mick Hill had been deluged with reports about a sighting that had occurred between 16.15 and 16.30 on Thursday 9 December 1993. Villages to the east of the town were primarily involved and literally dozens of people called to say they had seen the same thing. This persuaded his paper something was up.

After taking basic details I spent all day on the phone trying to persuade someone to go to Lincolnshire to follow through. Sadly, experienced UFOlogists such as Norman Oliver (who now lives in the county) were unable to do so for a variety of reasons - so I asked three NUFON readers who lived within 30 or 40 miles to do their best. They all did so, even though none were able to travel to the villages themselves. Having just been ousted from BUFORA, I was not in a position to use their resources to do anything much either - but, at least, we were able to piece together some data and I thank all those who responded magnificently to do what they could.

Indeed, I soon recalled that Peter Gregory, from Mablethorpe, about 5 miles south, had been in touch in the summer with a video that he had taken of two lights in the daytime sky. This was discussed at the Sheffield conference in August and was just one of several of his sightings in 1993. An earlier (and better) video had mysteriously been taken away from Mr Gregory in what can only be termed a bizarre MIB style aftermath. The video and a still was with BUFORA for analysis, but given the new sightings (and other signs of an ongoing flap) Mr Gregory's lights took on a whole new significance. So I endeavoured to see what I could follow up via BUFORA.

Meanwhile it was clear that the UFO seen by so many around Louth was our old friend the slow moving, utterly silent triangle. In fact it was almost exactly what had been reported in Belgium in 1989 and 1990 - provoking all the interest of world UFOlogy. Indeed, I discovered, just before the 9 December flap in Lincolnshire, near identical phenomena had been reported over the North Sea off the coast of Essex. Thoughts of mid air refuelling exercises (perhaps relevant to Belgium) did briefly pop up.

However, it soon became apparent that there is a lot more to the Louth affair than at first sight. For when Mick Hill had called round the air bases trying to find an answer he spoke with an officer at RAF Donna Nook who not only affirmed that they were shut and had no air traffic up but he himself had seen the UFO on the way home from the base! Nick Pope at the MoD confirmed (as he later told me in writing) that there was no obvious solution for these cases. They appeared to be genuine mysteries.

There was more - including reports of electrical interference on 9 December in the local villages. Peter Gregory was also mounting a full investigation and setting up skywatches with interested locals. One of these, on 4 January 1994 proved successful and several witnesses saw the triangle. One man had even obtained video film.

Reports on all the evidence is being collated and we will start with a full series of reports on the wave in the next issue of NUN. In the meantime any offers of help or skywatching etc can be directed to Peter Gregory at 24 Somersby Ave Mablethorpe Lincs or phone him on Sutton on Sea 442597

FINAL WORDS

HURG (see below) have a new magazine out called 'Dimensional Force' (one of the most imaginative titles yet). It has news, reviews and articles and costs £1. Well worth a look. In 1994 they plan a series of events on UFOs and circles over weekends at various colleges. More on that when we have it.

John Lundberg, the artist who had an exhibition based on 'UFOs and how to see them' last summer, has now tied up with artist and crop circle photographer Rod Dickinson and American UFOlogists Linda Moulton Howe and Bill Ellis to launch a visual extravaganza on circles, abductions and cattle mutilations. This multi-media affair is more ambitious than last time and the gallery have even produced a limited edition book to tie in (with added contributions from Jim Schnabel as well as Howe and Ellis). The exhibition is at the Independent Art Space Gallery at 23 A Smith St, Chelsea, London and runs on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 4 February to 4 April (11.00 to 18.00) Admission is free. Call 071-259-9232 for further details.

Regional Groups

SPI	(Scotland)	41 The Brees, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire	FK10 2TT
SRUFO	(Scotland)	123 Langton Vw, East Calder, West Lothian	EH53 0RE
NLUFOIG	(Cumbria)	89 Bare Lane, Morecambe, Lancashire	LA 4 6RN
LAPIS	(Lancashire)	58 Torsway Ave, Blackpool, Lancashire	FY 3 8JZ
NARO*	(North & West)	6 Silsden Ave, Lowton, Lancashire	WA 3 1EN
BRUFOP	(S. Yorks)	107 Gerald Rd, Kendray, Barnsley, Sth Yorks	S 70 3BQ
PRA	(Derbyshire)	12 Tilton Grove, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston	DE 7 4GR
NS Group	(North Staffs)	24 Nab Hill Drive, Leek, Staffordshire	ST13 8EE
PARA-SEARCH	(W. Midlands)	79 Sandringham Rd, Stourbridge, W. Mid	DY 8 5HL
LUFOIC	(E. Midlands)	PO Box 308, Leicester	LE 3 9AH
NUFORC	(Northants)	46 Occupation Rd, Corby, Northants	NN17 2EF
HURG	(Hereford)	6 Whitehouse Dr, Kingstone, Herefordshire	HR 2 9ER

* NUFON archive files held in central Manchester accessible c/o NARO T:0942-604265

You can visit the files by tram getting off at the St Peter's Square Station in the Manchester City centre. Bona fide researchers are welcome but calls in advance to the above number are essential.